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FROM: BERLIN

TO: Secretary of State

NO: 153, AUGUST 7, 8 PM

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ACTION BONN 131, POLAD USAREUR 74, DEPARTMENT 153; INFORMATION LONDON 80, MOSCOW 77. PARIS 85

PARIS FOR EMBASSY, USRO, KOHLER, STOESEL AND FINN,

WHILE STAUNCHNESS OF BERLIN LEADERSHIP AS REMAINED ON SURFACE UNIMPAIRED SINCE NEW CRISIS LAUNCHED BY KHRUSHCHEV'S VIENNA MEMORANDUM, OUTWARD OPTIMISM APPEARS TO SHIELD GREATER DOUBT RE FUTURE OF BERLIN THAN AT ANY TIME SINCE SOV NOV 1959 ULTIMATUM. MORALE OF POLITICAL AND PUBLIC LEADERS ON EVE OF WHAT THEY GENERALLY CONSIDER TO BE DECISIVE EAST-WEST NEGOTIATIONS SEEMS TO BE SUBJECT TO MORE FLUCTUATIONS THAN PREVIOUSLY OBSERVED. US JULY 17 NOTE, PRESIDENT'S ACCOMPANYING STATEMENT, BUT ABOVE ALL PRESIDENT'S JULY 25 ADDRESS TO NATION AND FOLLOW-UP ACTIONS INCREASING US MILITARY PREPAREDNESS HAVE CREATED DEEP IMPRESSION HERE. IT GENERALLY AGREED THAT NEVER BEFORE HAS IDENTIFICATION OF US NATIONAL INTEREST WITH COMMITMENT TO BERLIN BEEN SO CLEARLY DEMONSTRATED. ON OTHER HAND, BERLIN LEADERS HAVE BEEN MOST SENSITIVE TO MANSFIELD PLAN, LIPPMANN LINE, RECENT FULBRIGHT STATEMENT, ALL OF WHICH ARE TAKEN AS EVIDENCE THAT IMPORTANT POLITICAL AND OPINION-FORMING GROUPS IN US ARE MORE READY FOR DAMAGING COMPROMISE. IMPORTANCE ASCRIBED TO THESE VIEWS IS EXAGGERATED IN BERLINERS' MINDS BY FEAR THAT SOVS MAY REGARD SUCH EXPRESSION AS CONFIRMATION OF KHRUSHCHEV'S LINE THAT WEST WILL "CHICKEN" FIRST WHEN CHIPS ARE DOWN. LORD HOME STATEMENT JULY 22 HAD EFFECT OF CONVINCING BERLINERS OF BRITISH EAGERNESS TO NEGOTIATE WHICH THEY FEAR IS INDICATIVE OF UNDUE READINESS FOR ONE-SIDED CONCESSIONS.

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ALTHOUGH BERLIN LEADERS HAVE MADE SMALLER CONTRIBUTION TO INTERNATIONAL DEBATE DURING CURRENT CRISIS THAN IN 1959 AND BEFORE ABORTIVE SUMMIT (PARTIALLY BECAUSE OF BRANDT'S FREQUENT ABSENCES), THEY HOLD AS FIRMLY AS BEFORE THAT NEXT ROUND OF INTERNATIONAL NEGOTIATIONS MUST NOT BEGIN WHERE GENEVA CONFERENCE LEFT OFF. THEY ALSO KEEP INSISTING THAT EAST-WEST DISCUSSIONS MUST NOT BE LIMITED TO WEST BERLIN BUT THAT WEST SHOULD PRESS FOR DISCUSSION OF ALL-BERLIN PROBLEM. (IN ADDITION TO "ACTUAL IRRITANTS" PHRASE, RESTRICTION OF FRAME OF REFERENCE TO WEST BERLIN WAS SOLE CRITICISM LEVELLED AT PRESIDENT'S JULY 25 SPEECH.) SAME PRINCIPLE BELIEVED TO HOLD TRUE OF PLEBISCITE PROPOSAL. WHILE BERLIN LEADERS WOULD OF COURSE ABIDE BY ANY WESTERN DECISION RE HOLDING OF PLEBISCITE, THEY BELIEVE THAT SINCE THIS WEAPON CAN BE USED ONLY ONCE, TIMING OF PLEBISCITE SHOULD BE CONSIDERED MOST CAREFULLY. MOREOVER, PLEBISCITE MUST BE PUT IN SUCH A WAY AS TO AVOID ANY IMPLICATION IT WAS JUST A PUBLIC OPINION POLL; IT MUST BE SHOWN TO PEOPLE OF BERLIN TO BE A MATTER OF GREAT IMPORTANCE AND IN FACT IT SHOULD BE REPRESENTED AS AN ACT OF PARTICIPATING IN DECIDING THEIR OWN FUTURE.

TO SUM UP, BERLIN LEADERS ADHERE TO FUNDAMENTAL ESTIMATE THAT SOVS DO NOT WANT WAR. THEY ARE CONVINCED THAT THE WEST WILL NOT YIELD ON QUESTION OF WEST BERLIN'S FREEDOM. THEY ARE CERTAIN THAT WHAT REALLY COUNTS IS AMERICA'S DETERMINATION. PRESIDENT KENNEDY'S STATEMENT HAS CONFIRMED BELIEF THAT US HAS MORE TO LOSE IN BERLIN THAN GERMANS AND COULD AFTER LAOS AND CUBA NOT TOLERATE ANOTHER DIPLOMATIC DEFEAT. THEY ARE APPREHENSIVE, HOWEVER, THAT BETWEEN THE TWO EXTREMES OF STUBBORN INSISTENCE ON MAINTAINING THE STATUS QUO (WHICH THEY WOULD PREFER) AND SURRENDER TO SOV DEMANDS (WHICH THEY KNOW WON'T HAPPEN) A NUMBER OF WHAT THEY CONSIDER TO BE VITAL ELEMENTS OF THE ALLIED POSITION IN BERLIN AND OF BERLIN'S STATUS MAY BE BARGAINED AWAY.

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